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BILLY WHISKERS

By FRANCES MONTGOMERY

Billy thought the little girl's hair looked like straw, so he started in to eat it.

"Stop pulling my hair, Jimmy Jones!" she cried, without turning around. Jimmy Jones and Tommy Green were in the habit of pulling her hair or giving it a twitch whenever they passed her. So now she took it for granted it was one of them when Billy pulled it while chewing on it.

"Didn't I tell you to stop pulling my hair? I'll tell teacher if you don't stop this minute!" Billy did try to stop, but somehow her hair got between his teeth and he could not let go, much as he wished to do so. Of course the more he tried the worse it pulled. She turned quickly to slap the tease who was hurting her. But, horror of horrors! she found herself face to face with the big goat that had been playing with them in the yard. She was terribly afraid of goats, and had stopped playing when Billy entered the game, and had sat down on the school steps to watch them; so now she screamed as she was being killed. This brought a teacher and some of the big boys to the rescue. By this time Billy was really pulling very hard in his frantic efforts to get loose, but he was unconscious that he was doing so. The little girl, who had been looking at him, saw his head and made it pull more than ever. Then, too, if she had only stood still, but she kept jumping up and down and calling out: "Take the nasty old goat away!"

POOR BILLY

When the teacher arrived she soon saw what the trouble was, and, with the help of some boys, she quickly removed the strand of hair from Billy's teeth, which released the little girl, who fell half fainting and crying in the teacher's arms.

On being freed, Billy trotted out of the school yard mumbling to himself that he would never try to eat hair again, even if it did look like straw. He was just about to run out of the school yard when he saw a boy enter eating a big red apple, with another still larger and more luscious-looking in his hand.

Chases Boy

"My, but those apples look good! I must have one, no matter what happens," thinking surely the boy would follow him there. But on seeing Billy coming toward him the boy ran for dear life, trying to make the school door before Billy could overtake him. He did, but that was all. Billy had gotten a good whiff of the apples, and that settled it. He would have one of those apples, even if he had to chase the boy all over the school.

He was hoping the boy would be so afraid of him that he would throw one of the apples at him. But no such good luck. Up came the boy, trying to catch him. Close on his heels came Billy. The boy dodged into his room and tried to shut the door, but Billy was too close behind him. So he ran around to the far side of the room, thinking surely the goat would not follow him there. But on came Billy, more determined than ever to have one of those apples. Round the room they chased each other, with all the scholars standing up in their seats screaming and laughing and hugely enjoying the chase. By this time the boy was so afraid that his hair was standing straight up on end, and he was crying lustily. Had he known it was the apples the goat wanted he would gladly have given up both. He thought, of course, it was himself Billy wanted to butt. Now the extra large apple had been for his beloved teacher, and the second time around the room, as the boy reached the platform where she stood, he made a dive for her and threw his arms around her waist, calling to her to save him, save him!

Hit by Bottle

The teacher picked up a bottle of ink, the only thing on the table she could see to throw at Billy. It hit him on the horn and broke, and the ink began to run down into his eyes. This made Billy angry, so instead of chasing the boy he decided to go for the teacher, but her, grab the coveted apple from the boy, and make his

escape. Up on the platform he leaped, upsetting chairs as he went and overturning the table behind which the teacher and the boy had taken refuge. Billy shook the ink out of his eyes, leaped over the table and chairs, grabbed the apple out of the boy's hand, brushed against the teacher so hard that she knocked her over, stepped on her, and then left the room.

Runs Into Principal

On the way he ran into the principal of the school, who had heard all the commotion and was coming to see what was causing it. Billy, never slackening his speed, ran straight into him and landed the principal on his back, and as his head touched the floor his wig fell off. This mortified him so he let Billy adjust the wig for him. Billy tried to adjust the wig for himself, but when he reached his office and looked in the mirror he found it was on hind side before, and the part at the back of his head when it should have been on top. From that day the boys nicknamed him Baldpate, though they took very good care that he never heard them call him that.

No Good

As for Billy, he found his delicious-looking apple just as heart and was worm-eaten, so he had all his trouble for nothing and had a nasty spot of black ink on his snow-white whiskers and hair, too.

"I guess I'll go back to Mr. Noland's and see if Stubby and Button have returned," he thought,

and as he rounded the corner of the street on which Mr. Noland's house stood he saw the auto turn in at the other end of the very short block. Stubby jumped out and when he saw Billy he ran joyously to meet him, barking as he came: "Oh, Billy, you should have been with me. I've had more fun in my life. But what has happened to you?"

So the two of them trotted off toward the lake to recount their adventures. And as you are interested in the doing of Billy, Stubby and Button, perhaps you might like me to relate to you what happened to each of them.

Nellie took Button up in her arms and started over to see her best friend, Kittie Mead. Kittie owned a beautiful white Angora cat named Bella, who always wore a tiny gold bell tied around her neck with a blue ribbon.

When Nellie was within calling distance of Kittie's house she began to call: "Oh, Kittie, bring your doll carriage here quick! Hurry, hurry, for this cat is getting better and better!"

She carried Button in her arms most of the way, as she was afraid that he would run away if she trusted him to follow her. Now Button was no lightweight, you must remember, and the farther she carried him the heavier he became, and the more he slipped through her arms. So when she called to Kittie most of Button's long body was dangling around her legs, while she still held on to his neck in such a manner that the poor cat was just as good as dead.

"Oh, Kittie, don't you hear me? Come, come, come! I can't carry this cat another minute!" Luckily for Button, Kittie happened to be playing in the front yard just as she came. She ran just up Annabella, her favorite doll, to sleep in the doll carriage. So when she heard Nellie calling her she jerked the sleeping Annabella out of the carriage so quickly it nearly disoriented her and tossed her on the grass while she started on a dead run down the garden path to meet the calling Nellie.

When Kittie came up Nellie let go of Button and he dropped to the ground and lay like dead for a few minutes. Indeed, the poor cat was almost choked to death. Before he could recover and jump up and shake himself together enough to run away Nellie had picked him up again and plumped him down in the doll carriage and the two girls began to talk as they wheeled the carriage toward the house. Nellie was relating to Kittie all that had happened since she saw

her last, including the coming to her house of the goat, dog and cat, while Kittie talked so fast Nellie could not answer one question before she had asked two or three more. But neither of them noticed, as all they wished was to talk, not to listen, anyway.

Goes to Sleep

Button found the soft pillow in the doll carriage very comfortable and the motion made him sleepy, so he curled himself up a little tighter and went sound asleep. Had he known what they were planning to do he never would have risked that, but would have jumped out and run away. For these two little girls were planning to dress him up in doll clothes and play baby with him! Now that was one thing the dignified, independent Button could not stand. He had been used to play baby when a young cat, and he hated it. He had also made a vow that to the very next person who tried to dress him up in doll clothes or any other clothes would be scratched for their pains.

[Tuesday Button gets acquainted with Bella, the beautiful Angora.]

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